

# A peek into PM's thoughts on new economic order

JAKARTA, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today allowed participants of an international conference a peek into his nascent thoughts on a new world economic order.

He said that a new international economic order could only come about once countries of the North and the South realised that mutual interdependence was important and of benefit to all countries.

"Just as the South countries are willing to learn from the North, the North countries must be tolerant of views and values of the South," he told the International Conference on Human Resources Development within the Framework of International Partnership.

Dr Mahathir said this when responding to a question from a participant of the conference who wanted to know his views on what the new international economic order should be.

He said he had yet to put his thoughts together on the subject, but not wanting to disappoint the participant, he would nevertheless think out loud on it.

For the new order to emerge the South, mostly former colonies, should not be made to submit to the North, former colonial powers, and to rules, regulations and policies devised in the North for the North.

"Countries of the North and the South must now realise that they are at unequal stages of development but by being partners and

working together they could mutually benefit," he said.

To another question, he said it was important that Asian countries maintain their own value system even though they have adopted democratic ideals of the West.

Dr Mahathir, however, said Asian countries still needed time before their practice of democracy could match the levels of those countries from the West. And, therefore, there was a need for tolerance.

He said this applied to such other Western promoted ideals of human rights and workers rights. The North countries, if they want to be leaders, must be patient and tolerant.

Asked why he was pessimistic about the North-South relations, he said he preferred to be such because he has no reason to be encouraged by the attitude and practices of the North.

Also, he said he preferred to be pessimistic because if he was wrong then there was benefit to be gained from it.

A young participant asked whether it was his age that caused him to be pessimistic because young people are very optimistic about their future.

He said maybe it was his age as he had seen and experienced a lot during his years under the British and the Japanese. He was happy that the youth are optimistic.

"They must not just be optimistic but must work hard to ensure a good future for themselves," he said.